

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

production and stockpiling and for their destruction, and on appropriate measures concerning equipment and means of delivery specifically designed for the production or use of chemical agents for weapons purposes".

This is a difficult task to which our Conference has justifiably devoted a good part of its time. Thanks to everyone's devotion since, in 1984, we decided for the first time to give the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons an authentic negotiating mandate, the pace of its work has risen appreciably and the political will of its members has enabled obstacles that appeared insurmountable to be overcome. Considerable progress was achieved in 1985 and 1986, when the work of the Committee was led by Ambassadors Turbanski and Cromartie respectively, to whom I should like to express my delegation's sincere gratitude for the work done. At the same time, as regards the second of them, I should like to express how grieved we were to hear the news of his forthcoming retirement for health reasons.

We are now entering a decisive stage in our negotiations, one that has rightly been described as crucial for the success of our work. Hence, it is a source of particular satisfaction for my delegation that the job of presiding over this has fallen to the distinguished representative of Sweden, Ambassador Ekéus, who already gave proof of his exceptional diplomatic skill when he occupied the same post in 1984.

To achieve the ambitious goal we have set ourselves, we have decided that the scope of the convention should be as broad as possible. Consequently, we have identified seven basic activities which would be prohibited: the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, possession, transfer and use of chemical weapons. In addition to these, we have included the obligation for current possessors to destroy their chemical weapons arsenals as well as the facilities that produced them, thus giving the convention its nature as an authentic instrument of disarmament. There is general agreement concerning these categorical provisions, which is something that my delegation has welcomed with the greatest satisfaction.

In an attempt to cover all possible situations and taking into account the scope of the subject-matter at hand, an effort has been made to draw up all-embracing definitions. Thus, by chemical weapons are meant not only munitions and means of delivery, but also substances which pose a risk for the objectives of the convention, excluding substances produced for permitted purposes in quantities compatible with the ends for which they will be used.

When the convention enters into force -- something we hope will not take too long -- the States parties will have to tell the international authority whether they possess or do not possess chemical weapons and production facilities. The possessors will then have as their first duty to provide data in respect of their arsenals. My delegation deems it essential in this respect that the State should describe the location of chemical weapons under its jurisdiction or control so that the accuracy of its declaration can be checked in situ. That is why we welcome the recent Soviet decision to agree to give the location of their arsenals and, while we understand that this involves delicate matters of national security, we hope that the State which still believes that it is not appropriate to provide this information will reconsider its position in the near future.